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THE CALL OF THE CITY

BY

CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON

AUTHOR OF
"MODERN CIVIC ART"
"THE IMPROVEMENT OF TOWNS AND CITIES"
"ROCHESTER WAYS"
ETC.

Who once has known the city's lures
May cast them off in vain;
Its clangor on his ear endures,
Its lights are in his brain.
The freedom of the open seek—
Canoe, and camp, and shack;
But there the city's voice shall speak
To bid the wanderer back.

Edwin L. Sabin.

PAUL ELDER & COMPANY
SAN FRANCISCO AND NEW YORK

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I

THE CALL OF THE CITY

Uphold me on the danger-crest
of life,
O Mother City!

* * * * *

My heart is lifted on thy buoyant
tides,
Thrilled by thy cries of revelry
and woe.
The far hills call me, but I may
not go;
The woods invite me,— but thy
spell abides.

Marion Couthouy Smith
in *The Century Magazine.*

OF ALL the calls of the city, none that it gives is so insistent as that in the first cool days of autumn. Then its children, far scattered, hear its voice and return, and the youths of the fields and villages, with the stimulus of the fall upon them, turn expectant faces cityward.

It sometimes seems, indeed, as if nature and man reverse the seasons. When the spring comes to the vegetable world, it is fall with men. They long to fly to the arms of Mother Earth and to sleep like tired children clasped close to her heart, careless of passing days and unmindful of the work to be done. But when the autumn has come, and leaves are withering and falling and all the plants of summer bloom have spent their energy, then new life stirs in the blood of man, there comes an elasticity in the step, a higher

holding of the head and a zest for work. That is the time when one must come back to the city.

The city calls, as the woods, the hills and the ocean have called in their season and have been answered. Its call is not in vain, for it speaks to the best that is in us—to the zeal and the fire of manhood. Not as we wearily yielded to nature, but with a rush, with a shout in the heart, with an eager joy there is return to the town as to the mistress from whom there has been long parting. Soft beneath the feet, as the preacher hath said, are its stones; bright are its lights as eyes in which there is welcome; as music to the ears that the silence of nature denied is the roar of its traffic, and the walls of its buildings seem like an embrace.

How rare a mistress the city is! How

many are her caprices, how infinite the variety of her moods! Today she meets us with outstretched hands and smiling face, but there are times when she seems cold and distant, with gaze steadily averted. Sometimes she is joyous, full of frivolity and laughter; and sometimes solemn, fearfully earnest, hurried and sad. But always to those whom she loves she is sympathetic, precisely reflecting their own mood. As if one walked in a maze of mirrors, the figures on every side are the reflections of oneself. In her changes there may be read our own vagaries. When we feel poor and tired, weariness and want seem to surround us; if we are happy and prosperous, a like gladness is in her streets.

Coming back to the town, one feels its charm and knows this to be independent of mere beauty. The abundant vitality,

the splendid power, the organization of its forces, the consciousness that behind all the activity, and giving direction to it, there is intent, ambition and love—this thought appeals to intellect and emotion. The wind surges through the forest and great trees bend and sway—to what purpose and with what consciousness? The waves pound ceaselessly on sand and rock, with waste of energy and what lack of will! But the hurrying crowd is consciously directed; no member of it lacks objective point to which desire or duty compels him. Thus is there appeal in the surging crowd that is not in insensate winds; and a call to the heart in the roar of traffic, significant of a goal, that is not in the wind-blown sea. The ozone of the mountain does not stimulate as quickly as does contact with the city's vivacity and energy; and weakly

does the silence of the starlit fields impress compared with the effect of a city wrapped in night—

"And the moon on the sleeping city—
(Hush, word that would thought confine)
The glory of silvered castles rising
Up in enchanting line!"

Far and insistently then the city has called. Its lights and its shadows, its joys and its sorrows, its Herculean labors and extravagant indolence call. "Come, laugh with me and idle away the hours," cry the streets crowded with entertainment; "Come to me, I need you; uplift and help," moan patiently the suffering brother-peoples; "Behold my wares, my flashing jewels, my gaudy raiment, my horses and harness and cars and wines," have said the shops; "Be a man, bear your part in the work of the world," is in the hum of the wheels,

the click of the typewriters. And upon the building tops the fingers of steam beckon, "Come, come!" It is the call of the city, and as the sun-kissed clouds hasten over the autumnal sky, we come, we come!

II

THE CITY'S BEAUTY

Far sinking into splendor — without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright
In avenues disposed; there, towers, begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars.

William Wordsworth.

HE IS not to be counted a lover of the city who will not accept a challenge to measure its beauty. Indeed, he is a poor lover of any sort who sees no beauty in the object of his affection. But one needs not the faith of the little blind god to perceive the loveliness of the urban sunset, when the dust- and smoke-ladened air throbs with rich color; of the beauty of the plumes of steam that flutter from building tops; of the charm of orderly strips of well-trimmed greensward and rows of trees; of the brilliancy of the night effects; the picturesqueness of the water-front and the attraction of the life and movement of a crowd.

There are a thousand details that are not necessarily included in these, but that come to the minds of those who love the town. There are the gay shop fronts, the splendid prancing horses

in their jingling harness, the beautiful women fittingly gowned, the long curve of a river or harbor bank, the arch of a bridge, the faint glimmer of lights through a mist, or their infinite reflection on pavements that gleam in the evening rain; there is the light through painted windows, while to the ear come notes of distant music; there are the lamps of a long, slowly rising street, meeting in distant perspective as if saluting stars had been drawn up on either side of a way leading to the infinite; there are the flashing firefly lights of the hurrying cabs; there are some stately buildings, some poetic towers and spires; there are windows that flash back, like shields of gold, the yellow glory of a setting sun; and mountain-top cliffs of marble that are tinted in the rosy dawn. There are the breeze-flapped flags, the troops of

happy children and the flowers that theoretically ought not to be expected. The gurgle of a fountain, the music of a chime of bells, the weird skyward leap of the flame of a blast furnace, the darting lights of the water-craft, the reds and greens of the switchlights jeweling the railroad tracks—what urban delights are these, requiring no apology from one who would confess the charm that is wrought upon him by the sheer beauty of the city!

And to this charm of beauty there is added the stranger charm of the picturesque. The black, gaunt, high-shouldered mass of a warehouse; the rows of buildings silhouetted against the twilight; the busy little tugs that with prodigious puffing elbow their way through obstructing seas; the great locomotive, with its huge boiler, short stack and flying mane of smoke—how one may thrill

with the consciousness of the force and power gathered into the city!

Much as one must admire the handiwork of nature—now sublimely grand, majestic, colossal, and now incomprehensibly delicate and exquisite—there is also an inspiration in observing the work of man's hands, in seeing how natural forces have been made to do his bidding, and what mighty or beautiful or mechanically wonderful creations have been wrought by individuals like oneself—by men whose short span of life was in part apportioned to helpless infancy, in part to careless childhood, who at their best were not exempt from pains and ills and tempting distractions, and yet who achieved so much. What monuments to human skill and to the genius of men and their pluck in supplementing physical weakness, are cities;

and with what new and pathetic interest is the beauty of cities enhanced when one thinks how briefly the workers can enjoy the results they have accomplished! That lovely spire, that mighty building will scarcely have begun its life when the builder will have passed away and the human brain by which it was conceived will have become oblivious in the sleep of death. The sunset now silhouetting the city will flash tomorrow before other eyes, and the same dark towers against the twilight are soon to mean the brief resting-place of another people whom we do not know. The wild, fantastic swirls of steam seem ephemeral as they fly from the tall buildings to be lost in the blue of the sky, but their like may still be dancing in the wind when we who love them walk no longer the city streets.

Then, with head erect and heart attuned to the beauty that surrounds us, let us city dwellers go forth, frankly rejoicing while we may, to take our fill of pleasure from the scene. Let there be no apology because city pavements instead of grass and ferns are beneath our feet, and no regrets that a certain calm and lonely beauty or a certain awesomeness of grandeur is denied to us since the city is our home. We can love the beauty of the town. "Enchanting London, whose dirtiest, drab-frequented alley," cried Charles Lamb, "and her lowest-bowing tradesman I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn. * * * Oh, her lamps of a night, her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toy-shops!" There spoke a man!

III

ITS HUMAN INTEREST

In Angel-Court the sunless air
Grows faint and sick; to left and right
The cowering houses shrink from sight,
Huddling and hopeless, eyeless, bare.

Misnamed you say? For surely rare
Must be the angel-shapes that light
In Angel-Court!

Nay! — the Eternities are there.
Death at the doorway stands to smite;
Life in its garrets leaps to light,
And love has climbed that crumbling stair
In Angel-Court!

Austin Dobson.

THE wonder of the city is the dramatic element that pervades its every part. There is not a person in the city who is not the hero or heroine of at least one story, with a part in several others, for the threads of romance are tangled and crossed beyond unraveling and tales crowd each other more than do the people. Who would not rather sit at his window weaving stories of them who pass than lazily read the novel which another has written and in which the people are figments of fancy? Here every character lives. You really see them from your window or can meet them if you please upon the street.

The pause of those men to talk, the smile that passes between the boy and girl, are living episodes in one of the million books that will never be written. And you cannot be sure how the story is

coming out. Events crowd thick and fast, but the serial runs on, and for all you know you may yourself some day appear in it. Indeed, it may be yours to choose whether within the next half-hour you shall remain only a reader—a looker-on—or shall take a part in the story. For doubtless you can get into it if you wish. What a world of romance we are in, when life seems most commonplace and the world most preoccupied! Dull, surely, are printed pages in contrast with the life around us, where sacrifices cost and tears are real and passion is not a matter of rhetoric, but burns consumingly in the soul. There are little tragedies that seem to be genuine in the brute life that crowds about us; but we cannot measure the feeling there. With our fellows we know and can sympathize.

Think what tales could be told by the bench in a city square. Last evening Love used it, and like the flickering of the shadows was the beating of the hearts. A love story culminated then. This morning an aged nurse sat there with her little charge, and in the soft sunshine, while brown leaves were falling on sleeping crocuses, a story that was almost ended touched one that had just begun. Toward noon you might have seen a carrier stop at the bench to shift his burden—and consider what mysteries his bag contained. A distributor of fate, it is scant wonder that his letters and his papers were heavy with the heartaches and joys they bore. A tramp has come now to the bench, and as the shadows lengthen his head drops upon his bosom and the busy world about him is forgotten; but we may not know

the memories of which his dreams are made.

And how the stories intertwine! All unconsciously I touch elbows with one who is strangely to affect my life; reader and author collide and bow and pass, not knowing how their thoughts have been traveling together; two men, impersonally working against each other, cling to the same strap in a crowded car; and the face that attracts across the aisle is that of a friend's friend whose praise has been often heard and whose private history is known. We go forth, encompassed in fascinating mystery, sure only of this: that those whom we pass have far more to do with our lives than even they or we can know. Romance, poetry and tragedy touch us at every step, until the tangle seems to tighten hopelessly. We turn appealingly at last

to Him who alone follows the separate threads and who, we know, can draw out each one safely to its end.

For a visible concentration of the dramatic interest, one may go to the boat landing or the railroad station. There the coming and the going meet in a sudden apprehension of the dramas they enact, and one beholds such a crowding of stories as might be if all the characters of a bookcase of novels had stepped from between the covers and had met in a waiting-room. There, in the passionate embrace of welcome and the long kiss of farewell, there is a brief lifting of the curtain and a revealing of that deep emotion which, played at on the stage and written of in books, presses engulfingly about us in the real life of the town.

Thus is the city no place for introspec-

tion. No morbid self-study is invited here, where the angels of life and death are ever passing and ten thousand stories are spread before the eye. A wider interest than self is furnished. You who whip the streams or follow the chase may have here a worthier game than seeking to capture fish or bird or deer; and you who fain would have the stories that you read end joyously, can here have part in determining their end. For it may be yours, if you will, to lead Truth into dark places and so to change the current of a story, or helpfully to climb, with Love, the crumbling stair in Angel-Court.

IV

THE CITY'S FELLOWSHIP

Bred in the town am I,
So would I will to be,
Loving its glimpses of sky,
Swayed by its human sea.

Out of its greed and scorn,
Strong hands and kindly reach;
Over its discords borne,
Listen — what gentle speech!

Here in the surging crowd,
Modern in habit and names,
Linger all unavowed,
Simon Peter and James.

Judas goes cringing by
Heavily browed and wan —
Yonder, with timid eye,
Passes the loving John.

Yonder on flower-booth raised,
Pallid, the blossoms lean —
There in the lilies He praised,
Look! The Nazarene!

Robert Gilbert Welsh
in *The Reader Magazine.*

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IT IS not wholly true that we move through life as through a story. The passion that we read of in the books and of which we watch, with fascinated interest, the manifestations in a town, exists in our own hearts. The world may seem a stage, but every actor thinks his own part is true—in the main at least. It is not life that imitates the stage, but the stage that plays at life, and player-folk don the buskin and the *soccus* only because there are real tragedies and real comedies. From these not one of us can be exempt.

To experience these emotions is the largest and most blessed part of life. It is only some measure of this experience, indeed, that makes possible the enjoyment of the played or written story; it is this alone that endows us with sympathy—the strain of divinity in human

love; it is through it that we *live* our careers and are not merely lookers-on at life. And we who know how widely reaching are the stories all about us, how the threads tangle and cross and split, cannot expect to live apart. The narrative of any one life is concerned with innumerable others. There are heartaches where the clinging threads are parted, for the adhesive fibers are tentacles of love. Just as fibers make soft and warm the yarn, so these tentacles of love make soft our hearts and warm our spirits; and by their means, on the pattern of society, the flower of fellowship unfolds, making beautiful the world.

In the multiplicity and nearness of the town's companionship this is seen at its best. Here we find a friend for every mood. If there is no isolation in the life of the city, it is because in the city we

do not need to be alone. There are friends to laugh with us, and friends to mourn; there are friends to hope with us, to doubt with us, to believe with us. Our interests are shared and are made the stronger by others' sympathy and enthusiasm. Not as a voice crying in the wilderness, but as one of a band believing as we believe—with all the encouragement that such union gives—we make known our cause, raise our standards, and fight our battles. There is always the sympathetic friend to whom the dearest hope may be unbosomed; there is always one to whose greater experience we may turn for counsel; as surely as there are hands outstretched for our help, other hands are reaching out to help us. In the great beating heart of the city, our heart has no pulse that cannot find its counterpart, and so

is granted the stimulus of union and the encouragement of comradeship.

Laughter has ever its answering laugh. In the moment's warm pressure of a hand there may be concentrated how much of sympathy; in the responsive glance of approving eyes there is a world of inspiration; and in the denial of a look a challenge that is like a spur. Without the touch of this enveloping fellowship we were poor creatures indeed, dreamers who would bring little to pass.

There is, further, an encouragement in the town that is more than that of comradeship—the encouragement of great examples. They who are what we want to be and strive to be, walk before us in the flesh, in proof that this goal we set ourselves is not impossible and visionary. The cheering effect of this cannot be

measured. It gives one courage to dare, it shows him what to do, and it clothes with the intimate charm of personality the great figures of contemporary history. He learns that even as the bravest are the tenderest, so the wisest are most modest, the greatest are the gentlest and the busiest have most time to spare for others' aid,—that he who is most truly and rightfully a hero is also most lovably a man.

Thus is fellowship one of the precious gifts of the town—smoothing our rough edges, rubbing us brighter, enlarging our sympathies, satisfying our hunger of spirit, pointing and helping us forward. Then drink together, sing together, shout together! Only the city can know enthusiasm and the full zest of life—its breadth and its cheer, for in the city alone we exultantly feel ourselves to be

part of the living present, one of the co-related parts of God's great machine. "That man," said Charles Lamb, "must have a rare recipe for melancholy who can be dull in Fleet Street"—

*Fleet Street! Fleet Street! Fleet Street in the morning,
With the old sun laughing out behind the dome of Paul's,
Heavy wains a-driving, merry winds a-striving,
White clouds and blue sky above the smoke-stained walls.

Fleet Street! Fleet Street! Fleet Street in the noontide,
East and west the streets packed close, and roaring like the sea;
With laughter and with sobbing we feel the world's heart throbbing,
And know that what is throbbing is the heart of you and me.

Fleet Street! Fleet Street! Fleet Street in the evening,

*"A Song of Fleet Street," by Alice Werner.

Darkness set with golden lamps down Ludgate
Hill a-row:
Oh! hark the voice o' th' city that breaks our
hearts with pity,
That crazes us with shame and wrath, and
makes us love her so.

Fleet Street! Fleet Street! morning, noon and
starlight,
Through the never-ceasing roar come the great
chimes clear and slow;
"Good are life and laughter, though we look
before and after,
And good to love the race of men a little ere
we go."



V

THE CITY'S COMFORTS

She sees the fields of harvest
sown for her,
She sees the fortress set beside
her gate,
Her hosts, her ships, she sees
thro' storm and fire;
And hers all gifts of gold and
spice and myrrh,
And hers all hopes, all hills and
shores of fate,
And hers the fame of Babylon
and Tyre.

William Ellery Leonard
in *The Atlantic Monthly.*

IF NOW and then, on a wet fall day, the city does not seem attractive, one should draw up before his fire and read the journal of a lover of the country, of a hunter or a fisherman in his wilds.

The writer will early tell how shabbily the weather treated him, and it is a safe guess that one will not be so saintly as not to smile when thinking of the contrast offered by the safe harbor of a city. In town it makes little difference what the weather does. You can carry out your program with slight concern. Your tent doesn't leak, and you don't have to sit indoors. One can keep dry and warm and comfortable and, if need be, can go from place to place without a soaking, for there is always a car or a cab. But even should one walk, are wet pavements half as bad as soggy leaves or as wet grasses tangling around the feet? Just

because in town we live indoors, the out-door conditions do not seriously inconvenience.

The weather allusions have led you, of course, to put down your book and to blink contentedly at the fire the while you considered your coziness. The text of the out-of-doors journal rambles on, as it is fitting such journals should, and before it is done with the weather one may be sure of a page or so on the delicious difficulty of making a fire; on the remarkable failure of this particular fire, when built, to warm both sides of the body at the same time equally; and of the early darkness and the consequent, and admittedly, long and tiresome evenings when the weather is rainy. If you are human, you shift your feet on the ottoman and ring for William to turn on the steam heat; then you reach out a

lazy hand to a shadowy outline, now faintly seen in the fitful glow of the fire, and a desk lamp suddenly blooms into a flower of light. You reflect that in the morning your fire will be ready again for the match, and pick up the book to read further of what a pitiable fellow you are to be in town.

The tone of the volume changes with a change in the weather. The author regales himself with a rhapsody on the wild flowers, on their tender beauty (for the most part lost, he confesses, when they are picked), and on the charm of the unexpected when one comes upon a blossom that had not been looked for. Under his eager pen one gets the very odors of the country. But strangely mingling with the remembrance of dusty hay or of damp woods there comes the fragrance of a real American Beauty,

regally splendid in its tall, slim vase. You bought it three days ago, and it is good for perhaps a week. You were following the familiar trail that leads from the office to the house; and there it stood, directly in your path, with three or four dozen of its kind, and whole beds of autumn flowers—of asters and anemones, and bright banks of salvia, and clusters—such clusters!—of chrysanthemums. Good gracious! What adjectives would have served adequately the rhapsodizing writer had he come upon such a display! Unexpected? The flowers are as unexpected in your case as in his. You knew, as did he, that flowers would doubtless be found somewhere on the trail; but you were not sure just where, and were not looking for them. Indeed, you were thinking of quotations or of politics or of something equally foreign

when suddenly they were seen. The surprise was yours rather more than the woodsman's. If he would have preferred the anemone to the rose, that is a matter of taste. He did not have the choice as you did.

And now, what is this he says? He declares that the charm of the wild flowers lies in looking for them, and then coming on a variety that you do not expect. But it was only yesterday that you wanted flowers for somebody and you went to a certain dell you know of, undetermined just what you would choose, and there you found not only all the flowers of the season, but all the flowers of all the seasons, and you came away with the variety you had least expected to get. There may be objections to stony pavements, where the murmuring stream at the edge is known as a

gutter, but a city street—even in business sections—cannot be scorned for a want of flowers.

Turning the pages of the book, you come to chapters on larger game. It soon appears that the fish and wild animals one has known in his forest life—most of the books are written by amateurs—are the fish and animals whom he wanted to know, but which successfully eluded him. That is humiliating; but at the end of the chapter it is with shame admitted, and there is a brief discourse on the dispiriting but, one confesses, the appetizing, experience of going hungry. This is a matter in which it is advantageous to be in town. Armed with a purse instead of a heavy gun, and with dollars in lieu of cartridges, you can fill your bag anywhere. And you don't have to get up in the gray, chill light of dawn; you

don't have to sit all day in a boat, or tramp all day up and down a stream or through tangled underbrush until your hands are torn and your legs are tired. You don't have to shock your instincts of humanity by baiting hooks or by trying to lacerate the jaws of fish or by aiming at innocent bird or beast with deliberate intent to kill, and you don't have to dull your moral sense by subsequently telling lies. But whistling merrily as you swing along the street, you can get here a mallard and there a canvas-back; and here a trout—a three-pounder, oh, you disappointed anglers!—and there a pickerel, or a bluefish, or a salmon, as you prefer. And if you like, you can clap a partridge into your bag, while the child of nature is untangling his line from a tree, or is sorrowfully reloading his gun and watching his last chance for dinner

fly away. As for larger game, you do not hesitate between venison or bear's meat, but you can take them both, to show the kind of table you can spread in town.

If it is the landing of a fish, and not the eating of it, that's the fun — an ancient theory of the sportsman which is somehow not convincing,—you can have a pleasure that is higher than his, because purely intellectual, by getting a conscienceless tradesman on the end of the telephone line and playing with him there. In this case you are dealing with human intelligence instead of with mere fish instinct, and the sport is delicate and fascinating. There will be moments when, as happens with anglers, you will have a struggle with naughty words; you will also have to be ready for emergencies, in order to act without hesitation

and yet with no precipitancy. If you make a mistake, there is a chance that he will hang up the receiver, which is about the same as when a fish runs off with the bait, for having had him, you lose him. You must detect, not the physical, but the finer, psychological moment when he is played out and the net is to be instantly brought into use. That, of course, is the "one more trial"; but in using it you must not show excitement, or undue eagerness to land him. You must plunge it in deftly and with a calm that belies the fluttering of your heart. It is astonishing how women take to this kind of sport.

The book has been finished. The writer of the journal is sure that there is only one life to live—the life of which he has told. But if you are a real citizen he has not persuaded you. You do not

feel that you must exchange your dollars for guns and fishing-tackle, and sell your house and silk umbrella to buy a tent and a rubber coat. With that catholicity of spirit which comes from residence in a town, you only yawn as you write across the fly-leaf, "Many minds to many men,"—and you fall to wondering whether town life be not the lazier, rather than the more arduous; and whether it be not nobler, getting your sustenance with a nod or word, to spend your time on other matters instead of devoting the greater part of it to merely securing food, as do hunters, anglers and the brute creation.

VI

THE CHARM OF THE PAST

Oh world, thou wast the forest to this hart.

Shakespeare.

THE near consciousness of their past is doubtless an important factor in the attractiveness of cities. Sometimes it rises to the dignity of history, and in fancy one sees the streets peopled again with the statesmen and soldiers, the churchmen, wits and gallants of the long ago. A few old buildings, remaining, serve as piers for the architecture that imagination recreates; and we see once more the ancient pageants, hear old cries of condemnation or approval, and revert with curious interest to former points of view. But if it be that no world history was made upon these streets, that their stones have not been worn by characters of national prominence, that they who splendidly dreamed and whose dreams came true—or seemed true in the telling—have never walked here, even yet there is a close, dear past. We may at

least people the street with the spirits of those like ourselves, of the builders of the city which we have inherited to patch, rebuild and add to before we also are called away.

What a series of volumes it would take to tell adequately the history of a city street, to note the changes it has seen from forest to field, from bit of field to footpath, from country path to village street, to the highway of a town, to city thoroughfare; to marshal in array the joy and sorrow that have passed along it, or to tell the full story of the houses and buildings that have lined its sides! There is so much history in a street, every day so much happens there, that in considering it one seems on the edge of a boundless, mysterious forest where a thousand alluring vistas, ending now in sunshine and now in shadow, tempt one

to penetrate—while giving a warning—of how easily the way may be lost. But the fascination is strong. You dip into the dark recesses a little here and a little there. The heat and dust and sun of day are left behind, and wandering solitary in those calm and still retreats you find in one the prototype of a mighty tree that spreads its branches far and is a landmark of the forest. This is a noble character. In another there are good deeds done so unassumingly as to be like small wild flowers, that would not have been seen, had not the seclusion been thus pierced; and in the third, in semblance of a pool that mirrors him who looks upon it, is the likeness of oneself.

Not in vain, then, does one walk in these glades of history, half real, half visionary. In the shadow of their years is many a lesson; and many a resolve,

which in the glare of the present rages conspicuously as a powerful current, finds there in the dusk and obscurity its spring. The way is strangely tangled; thorn and flower grow side by side; the brightest leaf and berry may be poison; and where the shade is thickest, growth may be the best.

Thus once more the city street becomes a forest path; the shadows suddenly multiply, and the time-trees shake threatening arms and murmur grumblingly against intrusion; spirits stir among the bushes; a leaf trembles, and the light is gone. We are far in the forest of history, and the sunny street of today with its activity, cheer and present interest seems remote. Oh, wonderful street that leads to such a wood, partly real and partly fancied; and wonderful forest of history that day by day is growing unchecked

on the careless street! You may stand this afternoon on the busiest corner, and if the fates are kind, if the ears are good and the eyes are keen, you may see knights riding in the forest and robbers hiding behind the trees; you may hear the rustle of Naiads' garments, may catch a glimpse of falling tears or hear the sighs of love; and in and out among the bushes, like flecks of sunshine, you may see still at play the scampering children of another age.

Then, as suddenly as it came, the forest vanishes. There is only the roar of the traffic of today. Something has broken the spell; but ever more the city street has for you a new interest, and you listen amid the rattle of wagons for a clash of medieval steel and peer between the horses' legs for robbers hiding behind dark trees.

And always you know this: however much you see or hear, you barely penetrate the fringing edge of the forest of history, for its dim, mysterious recesses are many and deep and full.

VII

OPPORTUNITIES

*I believe that there is in life a great and guarded city, of which we may be worthy to be citizens. * * * Sometimes we discern the city afar off, with her radiant spires and towers, her walls of strength, her gates of pearls; and there may come a day, too, when we have found the way thither, and enter in. * * * I speak in a parable, but those who have found the way, and seen a little of the glory of the place, will smile at the page and say: "So he, too, is of the city."*

Arthur C. Benson
in *From a College Window.*

A STREAM of people flowing down the street, each with a purpose of some sort or other, the currents eddying and whirling around the currents of a stream bound in the opposite direction with like earnestness of aim—this is one of the city's impressive spectacles. In the parallel and cross streets you find it repeated, and you cannot fail to carry away a thought of the number of opportunities which a city must contain to afford so many and such varied goals. Where are the offices, shops and workrooms to which all these people go; what are the tasks they face and the ends they hope to gain; and what of that dream city—that city of crowded "Spanish" castles—which floats above them, to us invisible?

With thoughts far flown and half-closed eyes, one's own castle rises before

one, ethereal, trembling, constant; and one is able to guess of the walls and towers that others have reared about it pulsating, fading, and then alluringly glowing again in

* * * the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream.

These are the prizes for them who grasp the city's opportunities. This is the city of God, the holy city coming down out of heaven. This is the mirage that, seen from afar, bids youth beat the ploughshare into a sword and join the army that is struggling under its shimmering, ethereal walls. Vainly cry the golden fields, the flower-jeweled meadows and the somber woodlands once the vision has been seen. The gates of the city are open and the crowd surges in, valiantly to fight, patiently to suffer, some to win

and some bravely to die in disappointment. A vision leads and sustains.

Not always pure and true are the individual ambitions. Doubtless there is many a showy, glittering castle that would mock its possessor or must crumble at a touch. But a city of noble dreams still is left, and from each earnest mind and stirring spirit a scaling-ladder reaches to its battlements.

There is a legend, endorsed by many an instance, that they mount the rungs with best success who strive to draw up others as they raise themselves. Not by the fall of others, and not by ignoring the efforts of those who struggle below and on either side, but by the helping hand, by the lifting of another's burden and the pointing of the way to those whose vision has faded and become obscure, is the progress made most surely.

And there are so many in the city who need to be assisted. Of all the ways of opportunity it offers, no other is as broad as the opportunity to serve.

But the path of scholarship is wide and tempting, and splendid is that part of the city of dreams that hangs in the sky above it. This road is easier to travel in the city than in the country, for the grade is gentle, there are resources for all emergencies and there is the stimulus of companionship. Yet many fall in its academic shades, and many stagger as they advance, so that here too one need not work for himself alone.

There is another very tempting way for those who love music; and yet another for those who would paint or carve. You could imagine the streets of the city apportioned, with no great change, to the many different kinds of

effort. But perhaps the real condition is best—where the people mingle; yet each with his own path of duty, in his own mind a dream, and before him—invisible to others—a "certain star." These stars are the lights of the city of dreams, of the city that really counts.

The best and brightest castles are those that glow before the eyes of them who love their fellows. The moan of want—spiritual, physical or mental—was the city's call to these—the eager to serve,—and it has led them into dingy ways and narrow courts. But the glory of their vision and the beauty of their hopes transform the dinginess.

This is the secret of the city's higher call—the Opportunity it proffers, the easier, shorter, surer way to the goal of one's ambition. This is the mystic element of its subtle power—the tremen-

dous risk, with the chance of winning. Not all its glamour, not all its beauty, not all its interest, past and present, suffice to explain the force of its attraction. There still must be, now fading and now brightening, the city of the vision—the pillar of cloud and fire to challenge our faith and lead us on.

VIII

HOPE FOR CITIES

I bless God for cities. The world would not be what it is without them. Cities have been as lamps along the pathway of humanity and religion. Within them science has given birth to her noblest discoveries. Behind their walls freedom has fought her noblest battles. They have stood on the surface of the earth like great breakwaters, rolling back or turning aside the swelling tide of oppression. Cities have indeed been the cradle of human liberty. They have been the radiating, active centers of almost all Church and State reformation.

William Norman Guthrie.



SUCH is a catalogue of some of the greatest hopes for cities. They who follow a pillar of cloud are led by a hope, and before Dr. Guthrie's statements, quoted as introduction to this chapter, could be true there had to be broad hopes, exceeding even the realization—hopes for humanity, hopes for science, religious hopes, and hopes of liberty.

These, then, were the dreams of them who saw, not separate Spanish castles merely, but enough of them to make dream cities; who had it in their power to forget themselves in remembering their fellows. Little by little there have been secured in the real cities many of the things that have thus been hoped for. Much of wretchedness yet remains; but how much there is that is blessed!

The homeward march of the thou-

sands of toilers along a city thoroughfare when work is done is an impressive sight. In its concreteness one sees in it a type—"as if," it has been said of a Chicago thoroughfare, "all the laborers of the world were assembled on this one street, marching forward and onward. All minor differences of creed and race, which have divided the camp of toil so long, are being forgotten and submerged. The crowd is composed of people from Poland, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Hungary, Austria and Russia, and the vast stream amalgamates them all, making of them a people in common, with one aim and a central tendency. How many centuries ago was it that they would have had one another by the throat, struggling like beasts of different species?" This accomplished, we who live in town may surely dare now to

hope and strive for more—for cities that are beautiful by design as well as by accident; for cities that are politically pure, by habit, not by starts; for cities whose children are instructed and whose people are wise; for cities that have playgrounds for all, beauty for all, education for all, freedom for all, and the love of God in the hearts of the people.

To have this thought and the courage to make a hope of it, is to feel a new love for cities and to gain from them new inspiration. Mrs. Browning says:

"I can but muse in hope upon this shore
Of golden Arno as it shoots away
Through Florence' heart beneath her bridges four!
Bent bridges, seeming to strain off like bows,
And tremble while the arrowy undertide
Shoots on and cleaves the marble as it goes,
And strikes up palace-walls on either side,

And froths the cornice out in glittering rows,
With doors and windows quaintly multiplied,
And terrace-sweeps, and gazers upon all—

* * * * * * *

How beautiful! The mountains from without
In silence listen for the word said next,
What word will men say,—here, where Giotto planted
His campanile, like an unperplexed
Fine question Heavenward!"

That is it—it is a hope that is a question unperplexed, a vague but confident expectancy, which quiveringly actuates the city's crowd. They may fail, and even the city may fall; but they know that out of the cities comes progress. "He who makes the city makes the world," says Drummond; and the mountains listen silently and the rivers hush their flow, dutifully turning wheels and meekly bearing the burdens that the cities thrust upon them, while they

listen—listen for the next word, for the hope come true.

In the stress and strain of city life, let us dare to make fittingly splendid the hope we have for cities, and let us have the courage and the patience to transform hope to fact.



IX

WHEN PHYLLIS IS IN TOWN

The Ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She takes her buckled shoon
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

Austin Dobson.

WHEN Phyllis is in town the city is no longer austere and dignified. It becomes bewitching. Love is always full of sweet surprises, but at this time one may chance on a surprise at any moment and at any turn—for Phyllis may be there! When Phyllis is in town, the very streets are glorified because she walks upon them; the trolley cars are possible chariots since her dainty foot may mount the steps; and every closed carriage is worth looking into, lest her dear face be hidden in its shadows. You cannot know whether she may not be just around the corner, and whether, most tantalizing secret, she be in the crowd before you or behind you! Because she may be anywhere, her presence pervades the city.

When Phyllis is in town, the windows of the florists tug at heart-strings and at

purse-strings; the confectioners' tempting trays plead sweetly for the little mouth; the windows of the milliners unaccustomedly attract, for in them are plumes, of which one may get on Phyllis's hat; the windows of the jewelers fascinate, for in them are wedding-rings; and as to the windows of the great department stores, showing petticoats galore—ah, what thumping of the heart, what furtive glances, lest Phyllis be somewhere looking! Shall we ever see Phyllis and such things together? Can the thought be ventured?

When Phyllis is in town, the music of her voice is in every tingle of the telephone, because—perhaps—she asked that it should ring; the crowds are gayer and walk more blithely, since she may be there; and the church has a strangely romantic fascination where Phyllis sings,

demurely listens, or kneels in prayer. Dear Phyllis, what has she to pray for if it be not to intercede for you!

When Phyllis is in town, the changes of the weather create a picture-gallery. It never rains that you do not have a vision of tight curls, a halo of umbrella, a rain-coat and the lower portion of a little pair of shoes. The skies are never blue and the weather warm, that you do not see the fluttering flounces of a summer gown that tantalize and fascinate by their unsteadiness. And when the snow flies and the wind blows cold, two eyes peer laughingly above a muff.

When Phyllis is in town, the world is such a great big funny spectacle for you and her to look and laugh at; and when she goes, it is such a dreary, solemn drama!



X

HOLIDAYS

A rush, a roar, a gleam, a glow;
A great procession and a show;
A blare, a shout, a rush, a rout;
A threading in, a thridding out;
A snatch of song, a merry word
To tell a common joy has stirred
The common heart;
That's Christmas week on Chestnut Street.

Emma Sophia Stilwell.



FOR full enjoyment of the holidays, one surely must be in town. They mean more there than they could mean anywhere else, for they affect more people and their whole point is in their effect. It would mean nothing to the bird in the tree top to say, "This is Sunday, and you may spend the day as you will, restricted only by your conscience"; or to say to the squirrel, "This is a fête day, and you need not seek your nuts in the usual hiding-places unless you want to; but you may run and jump through the forest as broadly as you please." The rollicking, bubbling stream, told to enjoy itself because a certain number had appeared on the calendar, would laugh at you; but build a dam and make the water turn a mill-wheel, and the stream will laugh with you when you tell it that work is done and it can run away. Free-

dom means something then, and it will caress the rocks and jump into the sunshine, and, catching the flowers along its border, will dance with them in an abandon of delight that the wondering bird and the mystified squirrel who have been always at liberty cannot understand. That is the way it is in the city when a holiday sets folk free.

In the town even New Year's day, though it is shorn of the old making of calls and has become little more than a pause, is an interesting holiday. What a going over of accounts and balancing of ledgers there has been and is to be, and how impressive are the suddenly deserted business streets when one reflects that they are silent because the whole town is stopping its work to take thought of the beginning of another year; is buckling on a new armor of

hope, is sharpening anew the sword of faith and tightening the girths that on the morrow it may valiantly commence another battle! There is the awesomeness of the lull before a storm.

In the country the birth-night of a new year steals unnoticed upon the sleeping world. The black shadows on the moonlit snow are like notes of music, but they make an unsung hymn. The old year died unmourned, the new arrives unheralded. The striking contrast of ringing bells and blowing horns in the town that night is almost pathetic. It is symbolic of the pressing forward of city life. The old year is responsible for many kindly, gracious acts, but the disappointments and the trials and sorrows which it brought have so balanced the good that thoughts fly futureward, not back, and hopes are pinned to the new year and

its mysteries. On New Year's day you see a city pausing in its mad race of life, and no face turns back, but all eyes look forward.

And one must be in town on a patriotic holiday if he would realize its full significance. Then the flags that everywhere are flying, the martial music that pulsates in the air, the swinging, rhythmic step of the marchers, the windows blossoming with heads, the crowded curbs, the gala clothes, the care-freed faces—all combine to emphasize the celebration, and by the strength of that to make impressive the patriotic significance of the day.

Thanksgiving the country has claimed distinctly as its own,—as if the turkey, dressed in all the pride of his recent strut, were really god of the day, and the celebration were a harvest home. In

town—in spite of football contests—it seems to have a higher, more religious character. The mid-week pause from labor, the ringing church bells calling to prayer and praise, the general sharing of benefit with the poor so that on Thanksgiving, at least, no one need go hungry, form a better celebration because one more appropriate than mere feasting and making merry.

Then there are the great church days, which nowhere are observed with such impressive pomp as in the town. For Easter the streets are all abloom with flowers. One can hardly find a house too poor to have them in a window, a waist too worn or a coat too faded to neglect the touch of their brightening; they flood the city, flowing with their messages of love and hope and friendship into unexpected little crannies, lodg-

ing at the bedside of the sick and filling the houses of them who mourn. They fairly bank the chancels and pulpits of the churches, to join the silent praise of beauty to the pæans which on that day form a tidal wave of music that sweeps from city to city around the world. And the gay garments of spring which nature puts on by degrees, we don all at once on Easter day. It is a religious festival, but in the town it is something more even than that. It is the celebration of spring. There is put into it all the comforting joy of faith in a future life, and at the same time all the gladness of the present moment, when—

"The year's at the spring,
* * * * *
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world."

But best of all is Christmas-tide. For the Christmas spirit one must be in town. Weeks beforehand you feel its presence in the joyous pressure in the streets, in the crowded stores and attractively decorated windows. Ropes of laurel and evergreen, jungles of holly, bushes of mistletoe and forests of Christmas trees—what dreams they awaken, what visions of romance, what pictures of childish delight they thrust on business streets! Is it any surprise, then, to meet Santa Claus face to face; to hear through the office window the jingle of reindeer bells; to see, in fancy, when your thoughts should be soberly engaged, trees blossoming with tinsel flowers, apples of gilt dangling from their branches, strings of popcorn caught from limb to limb, and little stars blinking amid their foliage? Red stockings, "hung by the chimney

with care" and bulging with toys, dance before city eyes that are bent upon ledger and day-book; and in the shadows of dim corners of the shop there are seen in thought, for a week before and a week after Christmas, white-robed little figures tiptoeing from a bed.

Ah, what pranks on the town's exhausting toil and solemn business the Christmas spirit plays; into what a realm of tenderness and love it leads us! At that blessed season the only thing worth while is play, and every man or woman whom you meet in town, ladened with bundles, is at heart a Santa Claus, and in the bulging delivery wagons there are the equivalent of innumerable reindeer sleds. Philanthropy forgets its science and asks no references; there is only good-will to men and peace on earth. The city, which is so full of men, is the

place to feel most strongly the glad and holy change—the blessed childishness—that comes upon the world with each recurring Christmas as knees bend at thought of the little manger in the stall in Bethlehem. The wise men and the kings who knelt there two thousand years ago were prophetic, indeed, of our cities on Christmas day.



XI

ENTERTAINMENT

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Robert Browning.

WHEN all is said, the call of the city is to many, it must be confessed, a call preëminently to pleasure. It is noteworthy that there pertain to the town qualities to attract all sorts of persons. This is natural enough, for the town is made up of all kinds of people; but the fact is one more of those to be recorded to its credit. The esthete can find in it much that is beautiful; to the romantic mood it seems a collection of stories; the student enjoys the exhaustless history of which it is a record, the citizen loves the comfort it affords, and the dreamer discovers in the city the stuff that the noblest dreams are made of—the inspiration to high emprise.

There yet remain the kinds of entertainment and pleasure that are offered, strictly as such, by the town, and these are as many as the tastes of men. Why

attempt to name them, when their range extends from the library richly stocked with books to the lowest dance hall, from the sermon to the zoo? Whatever particular thing you love, even if it be nature, you can find it somewhere in the town; and if you do not love anything in particular, you are a poor creature whom nothing but the city can comfort. There is only one kind of misanthrope for whom it has no permanent attraction—the man who is utterly self-centered,—and even he must find at times a blessed relief in getting away from self, in losing track for awhile of his own individuality in the distractions of a thousand broader and more interesting personalities than his own.

And this, after all, is the best, as it is the most distinctive entertainment and pleasure the city affords. It is the crowd

that delights one. You cannot exactly define and analyze the enjoyment that it gives; but all the other attractions seem transitory, dispensable, and of mentally local appeal compared to this—the permanent, inseparable, wholly engrossing entertainment of the town. Until one can enjoy people one should not live in the city; and when one does enjoy them a solitude will seem very lonely after its novelty wears off. Oneself is soon distressingly poor company.

Does not this sentiment mean a higher development than the enjoyment of the woods? We talk about "going back to nature," and retrogression is admitted in the phrase. Primitive man wandered by himself and cities came only with civilization. There is something in the electric thrill of mere contact with many vibrant personalities; something conta-

gious in the sum of their energy, their pleasure, their zest of life. The boulevardier could argue his case, if he cared to; and could make his idle life seem attractive, even justifiable and broadly unselfish; but he knows that the most earnest worker in the city has already a secret sympathy with his career. He doesn't have to argue; he strolls and enjoys, and all the world smiles back.

We have been speaking of the history of the street; but to one who gets his pleasure from the crowd, that is an academic matter, as far as he is concerned, a theory of enjoyment. For him the history of the street is its history of a day; not merely the day's total of events that happen in it, although they make an important item, but the observance of its changing moods. The street is as different at different hours as it could be in

different years. In the morning when the milk-carts rattle severally on the pavement, and the humbler toilers are hurrying with pale faces that look pinched in the early cold, it is not at all the same as at nine o'clock, when the roar of traffic is almost trumpetlike, and when with the rush of the clanging cars you behold an army pressing forward. In the afternoon rubber tires are where the groaning wheels had been, and there is an air, not, indeed, of indolence, but of luxury and repose. At six o'clock a crowd, like a flood released, surges through the street; and after dinner, when the lights are blinking, when the theaters are gathering their devotees, when there are glimpses of jewels and laces in the carriages, and when even those who walk are leisurely and are dressed for pleasure—then the change is

marked enough to be dramatic. And tomorrow on the street may be as different from today as was yesterday—when, you remember, it rained.

If one is fond of music, the city is of course the place to hear it. But there will be none as moving as that symphony of the street to which the fluctuating crowd may be likened. There are songs of the seasons, when it sings,—now of violets, lilies and the coming spring; now of fête days, when the national colors are shown and there is a martial swing to the music; now of the Christmas spirit, when the notes crowd closely together, when the music is swift and strong and the joyous theme is "Good-will to men." There is also the daily song—the morning song of the workers, inspiring in its swinging time; the chorus of women, of shoppers, with

slow time but crowded notes, and with now and then a gay little aria; the leisurely, voluptuous march of the afternoon; and then the song of the weary, when the bass comes in with heavy accompaniment and a minor is woven into the theme, as the feet that passed so briskly in the morning shuffle at last on dusty walks. The night song begins with pleasure, love and wine, and dwindles into a lullaby.

But it is late when a city goes to sleep. Far into the night many still hear it calling: "Come, leave care, and wander; forget yourself with me!"

XII

SLEEP

* * * *the very houses seem asleep,*
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

William Wordsworth.

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THE city sleeps and dreams, and
dreams are sweet.
How dark and still the street!
At peace, the citizens all silent lie;
There is no restive eye;
The breath is calm, no hurried feet
go by—
Night falls, and rest is sweet.

The strife and struggle of the garish day,
The world of work and play,
The turmoil and the fighting—all is past.
Nor loves nor hates outlast
The wondrous shadow of the truce
that's cast
When night puts all away—

As if the citizens were only boys
Grown tired of tasks and toys,
And seeking loving mother's knee,
that there,
With bedtime kiss and prayer,

They might forget the daylight's little care
And surfeiting of joys.

O peaceful stars, compassioning, watchful eyes,
Make low the lullabies
That in vast unison the planets sing;
Let them wake not, nor bring
Too soon the pitiless mad dawn on wing
That, gleaming, stirs the skies!

And thou, pale moon, pass on with silent tread—
Thou 'st seen the world to bed.
Do ye, mild winds, snuff out her little light
With big clouds, soft and white,
As she upon the sleeping world shuts tight
The door, her "good night" said.

And ye, black rivers, rolling to the sea,
Roll on most quietly,
 Lest ye may wake the city, lying still,
 Unconscious of the ill
 Or good the morrow may bring forth
 to fill
Its cup,—blest mystery!

And last, O Father of the world, look
 down
With smile, and not with frown,
 And bless the city proud and rich
 and great.
 Forgot is its estate,
 In childlike innocence, immaculate,
It sleeps—Thy peace its crown!







